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ENG 3405-002: Children's Literature

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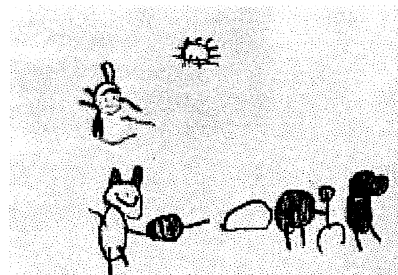
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3405-002

English 3405-002
Children's Literature
Fall, 2009
TR 11-12:15, CH 3160



SYLLABUS

Course Description: Centered on traditional classics, the course offers a chance to discover and rediscover many of the best-loved works for children. But it will ask you to read with a certain sophistication, attending to the surprising subtleties of supposedly simple readings. Works studied will range from the briefest nursery rhymes to such longer stories as *Little House on the Prairie* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Authors will include Grimms, Andersen, Carroll, Alcott, Kipling, Wilder, Twain, and Anonymous. Usually we will be less concerned with pedagogical questions (what you can "use" in a K-12 classroom) than with larger philosophical and cultural issues. Lots of reading, lots of work, lots of fun.

A writing-intensive course, 3405 will incorporate regular quizzes, 2 papers, a mid-term, and a final exam, with essay questions predominating on the two exams.

Instructor: John Kilgore. Office: 3331 Coleman Hall. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395 (home). Office hours: TR 3:30-5:00, F 1-3. Also frequently available on Wednesdays, around mid-day. E-mail: jdkilgore@eiu.edu. Please feel free to call my home at reasonable hours. When leaving voice mail at the office, include date and time of call, and do not trust voice mail for urgent messages — try my home or cell phone instead.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Extensive assigned readings.
- 12-14 quizzes and in-class writings. (15%)
- Two papers of about 1250-1500 words each (40%)
- Oral report (10%)
- Mid-term Exam (15%)
- Final Exam (20%)

I reserve the right to depart somewhat from these percentages.

Readings. Are substantial and sometimes challenging. Getting these done in timely fashion is essential. Depending on how good and avid a reader you are, and on a myriad of personal factors, most readings should be fun, but a majority should in one way or another take you beyond the bounds of what you might read on your own. Some works may strike you as strange, difficult, or even dull. It is very possible that these works, rather than those you find more immediately accessible, have the most to teach you — if you persist with sufficient energy. Above all, **read ahead** to make sure that you are prepared for quizzes and class discussion.

Quizzes and in-class writing assignments. These will happen throughout the term, at a pace of roughly once per week. Such exercises will NOT be announced ahead of time, however, and it is not impossible that we will have two in a given week. The most usual format will require you to

write a paragraph demonstrating that you have done the reading due for the day and are prepared to discuss it. The usual time allowed will be ten minutes. Late arrivals must hand in their papers at the same time as everyone else, and **quizzes may not be made up for any reason.** (Sorry, but any other policy is just not feasible.) However, I will throw out your lowest 2 or 3 grades, giving you something of a cushion for unavoidable absences.

The quiz component counts for 15% of your total performance in the course, and can give your grade a healthy boost if you are consistently well prepared. At the other extreme, be aware that missing or failing a large number of quizzes may make it impossible for you to pass the course. In such cases, the quiz component of your course grade will not just be a zero, but a negative number, affecting your average disproportionately.

ORAL REPORTS. Will be 10-minute speeches in which you discuss and report on some children's book that was a favorite of yours when you were younger. Avoid extensive plot-summary, but give us a vivid, clear impression of the book and share your enthusiasm for it. Relate your experience of this book to the course themes as appropriate, and try to explain why the book made such an impression on you.

You may want to use the audio-visual resources available in our classroom; if so, check ahead of time to make sure the equipment is what you need.

Exams. Are scheduled for week 9 and finals week. Both will feature a mix of objective and essay questions designed to establish that you are familiar with **all** the readings to that point and can relate various works to underlying themes and concepts we have been discussing.

Papers. Will come due in weeks 7 and 13; see schedule below. These are to be analytical discussions of about 1250-1500 words, thoughtfully posed, rigorously developed and defended, written with great care. Detailed writing guidelines and suggested topics are online. You are welcome to develop your own topics rather than writing on the suggested ones, but must first get written permission via e-mail.

I welcome consultation — in class, after class, or via e-mail — in advance of the due dates. In particular, I am happy to respond to drafts as my time permits. Two caveats, however. First, no one ever wrote a good paper *just* by following the teacher's suggestions (or anyone else's, for that matter). Help helps only when accompanied by a renewed creative effort on your part, and plenty of independent thinking. Second, in fairness to everyone, no matter how much I have seen drafts or pieces of a paper in advance, I will read and grade the final version as if I had never seen it before. I.e., no extra credit will be given merely because we have had the conference, or merely because you have tried to follow my advice.

Final drafts must be in hard copy and should follow the usual conventions of manuscript form. Double space, number your pages, use 12-point font and blue or black ink, and leave 1" or 1.25" margins all around. No report covers, please; a modest cover page will do nicely. Give your paper a title, centered a few lines above the first paragraph. In the upper-left corner of the first page, provide a heading which includes your name, the date, the course (English 3405) and the assignment, e.g. "First Essay." **E-mail is not acceptable except in emergencies.**

Plagiarism and cheating. Will be dealt with harshly. For clear-cut and deliberate instances, my policy is both to impose an F for the course (not just the paper, the whole course) **AND** to file an incident report with Judicial Affairs. I certainly do not enjoy being so strict, but find that such measures are necessary, in the Internet era, to protect students from the unfair pressures generated by a very few cheaters.

Late work policy: I am willing to be somewhat flexible providing you have been in touch with me **before** the missed deadline. Otherwise, late papers will be penalized one third grade (e.g., from "A" to "A-" or from "A-" to "B+") for each calendar day of lateness, weekends and holidays included. In addition, late work forfeits the right to "feedback"; it will be returned with a grade, but

no marks or comments.

I will be more than happy to make reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability. Please contact me if you will need such an accommodation; or call the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services, 581-6583.

Grading Note. As a convenience in averaging, and for a little greater accuracy and flexibility, I use a scale which includes split grades, e.g. A/A-, A-/B+, etc. These mean simply that the grade falls numerically half way between the two grades. For example, since A equals 4.0 on the 4-pt. scale and A- equals 3.7, A/A- equals 3.85. A-/B+ equals 3.5. The whole scale is as follows:

A	4.0
A/A-	3.85
A-	3.7
A-/B+	3.5
B+	3.3
B/B+	3.15
B	3.0
B/B-	2.85
B-	2.7

etc.

Miscellaneous. During class, feel free to slip out at any time when you need to; just don't scream or turn cartwheels as you leave. Please set your cell phone to "stun," or whatever it is that keeps it from making actual noise. Do NOT send or receive text messages during class. Please refrain from "packing up" during the last few minutes of class. I will signal when the discussion is done, and promise to end before the period is over.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Griffith and Frey, eds., *Classics of Children's literature*, 6th ed. (C)
- Jack London, *Call of the Wild*
- Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*
- Scott O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

SCHEDULE

Note: Please complete the readings for each session **before** the class meets. As the course gets underway, try hard to **READ AHEAD** of the schedule. You will have a hard time keeping up if you do not make a head start on the longer readings.

Page numbers refer to *Classics of Children's Literature* except where otherwise noted. When a longer work from this text is assigned, please read the editor's introduction as well as the main text. To keep track of schedule adjustments, please make a habit of bringing a hard copy of the syllabus to class with you, and check the online version periodically.

1) August 24-28

Introduction, 1-4. Newbery, Nursery Rhymes, 30-35.

Didactic Poetry handout

Nursery rhyme handout

Meter and prosody handout

2) August 31-September 4

Discuss meter and prosody.

Sign up for reports.

Perrault, "Little Red Riding-Hood," 10; "Blue Beard," 11; "Cinderella, or The Little Glass Slipper," 17.

The Brothers Grimm, tales, 36-85, especially "The Frog Prince," "Hansel and Grethel," "Aschenputtel," "Rapunzel," "The Sleeping Beauty."

3) September 7-11

Jacobs, "Jack and the Beanstalk," 620.

De Beaumont, "Beauty and the Beast," 22.

Andersen, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," 129; "The Ugly Duckling," 131.

Conclude Fairy Tales.

4) September 14-18

Alcott, *Little Women*, 181.

5) September 21-25

Alcott, *Little Women*, 181.

Review, catch-up, writing conferences.

6) September 28-October 2

T: First Paper Due

Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, 322.

7) October 5-8

Reports.

8) October 12-16

Reports.

9) October 19-23

T: Mid-Term Exam.

R: *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 375.

10) October 26-30

Adventures of Tom Sawyer, 375.

11) November 2-6

Kipling, *The Jungle Books*, 806. Read "Mowgli's Brothers," "Kaa's Hunting," "Tiger-Tiger!", "Red Dog," and "The Spring Running."

12) November 9-13

Finish Kipling.
R: London, *The Call of the Wild*.

13) November 16-20

Second Paper Due Tuesday.
Finish London, *The Call of the Wild*.

Thanksgiving Break, November 23-27

14) November 30-December 4

Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*.

15) December 7-11

O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

<p align="center">Misc. Online Resources (See Author Resource Page as Well)</p>
<p>Notes on Meter and Prosody Adam Gopnik on Lewis Carroll. Lewis Carroll Photographs of Children Tenniel Illustrations to the Alice books Banned Books List Discussion of Banned Books Dr. Murray's Young Adult Literature Web Site Dr. Kory's Children's Literature Web Site</p>
<p align="center">Top</p>